



# **RATE OF FIRE**

**The Newsletter of the Paddington Bears ASL Club**



**Issue 17**

**Summer 2001**

## Rate of Fire

Newsletter of the  
Paddington Bears ASL Club

This newsletter is dedicated to the play of Advanced Squad Leader ©, and the players and news of the ASL community in Australia.

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I would also encourage players everywhere to take several copies to local game stores to be provided **Free of Charge** to any interested gamers.

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To make a submission, send your piece either by email or by mail me. I will return any item with comments I feel needs more work. Otherwise, I will refer the item to an independent proofreader and reviewer to check that the item is substantially correct and readable. It will then be included in the next appropriate issue.

There is no particular size limit for Rate of Fire, I will issue what I have. Given sufficient submissions, I may make an attempt to do Special interest issues, grouping submissions by subject.

From time to time I will request players to write articles for the newsletter. Please consider these as "my last editorial demand" to paraphrase a famous German leader

**Mark "Mine dog" McG  
(Editor)**



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## FOREWORD

Hi,

The usual tournament reports in this issue, plus we a privileged to have a letter from that luminary, Perry Cocke. Feedback, wow! Keep it coming.

With the break up of the Soviet Union, new material on the Soviet forces of WW2 is coming to light. Given the new material, it seems a good time to look again at that winner of The Great Patriotic War, the nemesis of Hitler, the Red Army.

This will be my last issue as editor for a while, since I am soon to be a new father. This is a fulltime job in itself I'm told, so I don't expect to have a lot of free time.

**Mark McGilchrist  
Editor**

### WEB WATCH

Some sites to watch;

**Russia Military Zone**

<http://history.vif2.ru/>

**Red Steel**

<http://www.algonet.se/~toriert/Kursk>

<http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/town/avenue/vy75/kursk.htm>

## **Letters to the Editor**

Sir,

I hope to ameliorate David Longworth's description of Kevin Valerien in the recent (Summer 2000) *Rate of Fire*. Obviously, David's experience was valid for him at that time, but I would hope that his description does not turn away all your readers from the chance to play Kevin at the next opportunity.

First off, I have to agree with David's description of Kevin's pleasant manner and friendly nature. You can't find a nicer, more helpful guy. Nor can you find a much better player.

Second, I have to question David's description of Kevin as the world's slowest player. David has obviously never played Pokey Perry Cocke. Granted, Kevin does have a well-deserved reputation for pokey-ness, but it is stretching things to put him in the same category as me. No one knows better than I the glazed eyes that can look out upon the pokey player, especially if the opponent is already tired. I am sure that if David had been refreshed he would have enjoyed his game with Kevin much more.

Kevin's careful analysis of the available options in a playtest scenario is an invaluable asset to our playtesting efforts at MMP. We depend upon Kevin in this regard. Obviously, not enough playtesting would get done if all of our playtesters played at the slowest of the various speeds available to Kevin. He can pick up the pace when necessary, however, and if each of our playtesters played as smart as Kevin, there would be a lot less time wasted over scenarios with botched openings, etc. Kevin and I have,

however, been prohibited from playing each other during playtests, except in the most unusual of circumstances.

Taking back disastrous moves is second nature when playtesting at MMP. Although contrary to the spirit of A.2, any truly aberrant result is possibly subject to re-playing, whether it is an early second red card drawn for a powerful OBA module, an early "X" result on an important weapon, or a patently stupid move like driving a second tank onto the bridge in *The Professionals* before necessary. This is by no means the case in every possible instance during playtesting; sometimes we want to see what happens after an aberrant result, sometimes we just take the result into account when evaluating things later; but our playtesters are at least thinking if re-playing the result is the most efficient means to the end. In that light, I would not judge Kevin too harshly for asking if David minded if he took the move back, especially since I know that Kevin would have accepted a negative response from David with good grace. Again, if David had been more refreshed he likely would either have felt better about standing up for his rights or have been able to make a more informed choice to give in, and his memories would therefore be happier. Fatigue adversely affects us all.

I have my own short list of players I will never play again. Life is too short. I merely urge your readers not summarily to consign Kevin to their own list of players to avoid.

I have been enjoying your newsletter. Keep up the good work.

*Perry Cocke.*

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## **SAGA 2000: THE WRAP-UP**

This year's SAGA tournament was somewhat smaller the previous years, and lacking an interstate representation, but was still keenly contested. The ten contestants and two organisers suffered the additional indignity of being shunted from room to room like a sheep in a shearing shed, effectively placed on the lowest rung of the role-playing ladder in status terms. In one case, an unfinished game had to be carefully carried from one room to another so that Cyberpunk players could take their allotted place in the universe.

The four scenarios were possibly the best set of tournament scenarios ever devised in Australia. The set had no Japs and no Yanks, a rarity for such events, and featured two longer scenarios to provide for more leisurely play. The scenarios were all named after Graham Greene novels, a fact which none of the players picked up on.

### **It's A Battlefield**

This scenario featured an action from Normandy, with a combined arms German force attacking British infantry and two (count them) 17 pdrs. Of the five games played, four were German wins. Only one game featured an early concession, the other all went to the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> turns. Also of note was the fact that in each game, the higher seeded player bid for and received the favoured side, and there were no contested bids; the only upset was Mitchell overturned by Gritter. In retrospect, the game was still felt to slightly favour the Germans; changes were an additional British half squad and HIP for one MMC.

### **A Burnt-Out Case**

This scenario featured a Russian mobile recon force against a German security force dug in around a crossroad. The result was four Russian wins; the exception was where David Bishop essentially forgot that he had to enter the pillbox itself to claim control and win. The scenario, being the smallest of the lot, will always be more luck-dependent, and would be more pro-German if played in a non-competition environment where the Germans had more time to ponder the set-up options. Changes were restricted to rewriting the SSR for German setup and including an SSR for Recalling the Russian trucks after they have unloaded.

### **The Lawless Roads**

This scenario featured a force of British infantry and light and cruiser tanks against a village held by German infantry (no Panzers—count them!). The six games played (Les Kramer dropped in) came out at three wins for each side. One game was a turn 3 concession as Simon Mitchell's British infantry were largely shattered in the initial rush and were unable to rally in time, but

every other game went to the last turn, and 3 actually went to the last CCPh. As the scenario was felt to be balanced, no further changes were made.

### **Loser Takes All**

This scenario features a heavy metal clash as lower quality SS subject to ELR replacement attack a Soviet held village from two sides. The five games ended up with two German and three Soviet wins. At least one was a dicing as Paul Seage hosed Mark Bretherton in the deciding game, with the others following a closer path. No significant subsequent changes were made, except for a proviso that the rolls for seeing which SU-100s were TI could be made secretly if agreed by the players.

### **The Results**

The overall results were:

1. Paul Seage
2. Mark Bretherton
3. Paul Haseler
4. Gordon McClelland
5. David Wilson
6. David Bishop
7. Mark McGilchrist
8. Daniel Harrison
9. Simon Mitchell
10. Leon Gritter

As a final note, the tournament was run on a knock-out system, with the two lowest seeded losers eliminated after the first round, and a direct elimination thereafter. If the pure points system had been used the order would have been:

1. Paul Seage
2. Paul Haseler
3. Mark Bretherton
- 4.+ unchanged

## OCTOBear 2000 TD Report

OctoBear 2000 was held on from October 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> at the Paddington-Woolahra R.S.L. Club, our usual haunt. There were 11 starters and 7 finishers, with 2 players playing only Saturday, and 2 players missing the 3rd round.

### Scenario 1 - A Clinical War



A small Deluxe scenario pitting the Nationalist Moors (Axis Minors) from the Army of Africa against Republican International Brigaders of the German speaking Thaelmann Battalion (Partisans) in a fight for the Clinical Hospital (aK2) in Madrid, 1936. The essence of the scenario is for the Republicans to break into the building, and clear the top floor. The Nationalist must either repel them as they cross the streets, or cause sufficient casualties on the streets to have the strength to eject them from the Hospital building.

3 Nationalist & 2 Republican victories. Bye a Republican victory.

On the whole a fairly balanced scenario. The main flaw with this scenario is that is a bit dicey. If the Nationalists shoot well at the outset, they can win easily, if they shoot very badly, the Republicans win easily. Of the six games, one Nationalist victory, and perhaps two Republican victories were of this nature. Two games came down to the last CC Phase, so it certainly could be a tussle.

### Scenario 2 - Minedog!

The largest scenario of the competition, set in the Kerch Peninsula in May 1942. In October 1941, the Romanian 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and German IX Armies had besieged Sebastapol, but in the winter offensives of December 1941, the Russians had conducted (at huge cost) an amphibious landing across the Taman at Kerch. The offensive never reached Sebastapol, but it did succeed in forcing Manstein to split his forces and to cancel his assault on Sebastapol.



*Romanian T2 Tank - the Czech Škoda LT vz35*

By May, Manstein had been reinforced, and wished to clear the Kerch Peninsula as a prelude to a full scale assault on Sebastapol. Using his German troops, and 2 Romanian divisions to attack, a small amphibious operation unhinged the Russian flank, and the usually tenacious Russians reeled back to Kerch, where at least some escaped across the Taman. This theatre was a disaster for the Russians, and Stalin's own representative, Lev Mekhlis, was sacked for his poor performance.

Aside from these details, the scenario is speculative. The primary desire was to use Minedogs, the Czech LT vz35 (known as the R-2 in Romanian service), the Russian Molotov Projector in the rural areas and an engagement between Axis Minor regulars versus Russian conscript troops.

### Scenario 3 - Ambush at Small Creek

1 Rumanian & 4 Russian victories.

Bye a Rumanian victory.

*Balance provisions:*

Rumanian 1 (4-2-6 to 4-4-7)

Rumanian 2 (4-2-6 to 4-4-7) x2

Both Russian wins

In the event, the Minedogs were very uneventful. The simple expedient of stopping the tanks at the end of each MPH virtually negates the Minedogs, though they may prevent the Vehicular Bypass sleaze.

The scenario seems a little pro-Russian, though perhaps not as much so as I initially thought given that two games were played with a Russian balance, and in one game the Romanians surrendered almost without loss. I suspect that a second playing would produce far more Romanian victories, since I believe many Romanian players were overly conservative in their approach, overlooking the very sparse Russian firepower beyond the range of 4 hexes. This highlights one of the inherent problems of multiple playtests, a practice factor!

A revised version of this scenario is included in this issue, I hope you get a chance to play it.



A scenario set on a section of *Those Ragged Bloody Heroes* map. As a result of poor reconnaissance, the Australian 2/14<sup>th</sup> Battalion walked straight into an Ambush trying to prepare for an offensive the next day. In the gathering twilight, they couldn't even see the Japanese positions, and took many casualties. The next day they cleared the area almost with ease.

1 Japanese & 2 Australian victories. Bye a Japanese victory.

I felt this was a fairly balanced and close scenario. The HIP pillboxes and Cleared Fields of Fire seemed to work well enough, and many "ambushes" took place. Close combat was the order of the day for the Australians, and the Japanese took their advantages as well. The Cleared Fire Zones seemed to work adequately, effecting both the "ambush", and the difficulty the Australians had approaching the Japanese defenses.



#### Scenario 4 - Helen



Another Australian assault on Japanese fortified positions, this time up a jungle covered steep hill. My main regret with this scenario was that it was quite similar to the Ambush at Small Creek scenario, but that's what I had in the bag. The most notable event of this assault was the posthumous Victoria Cross winning exploits of Cpl. J.B. Mackey.

3 Japanese & 1 Australian victories. No Bye  
*Balance provisions:*

Australian 1 (+1 Counter) - Australian Win  
Japanese 1 (-1 counter) - Japanese Win

With the small sample, and the fact that both sides won against the balance provision, I'm quietly confident this was well balanced. Most scenarios came down to close combat, with only one playing having Japanese MG firepower take the win. The variable Japanese OB should make this high on replay value as well.



JOHN'S TRACK VIEWED FROM HELEN FEATURE..

#### Tournament Results:

**Gold:** Paul Haseler

**Silver:** Les Kramer

**Bronze:** David Longworth

Overall the tournament ran pretty well, with almost all the games finishing on time. Whether this was to do with the relative scenario size (on the small side), or with the time penalties I'm not sure. However, it was a blessed relief not to have games drag on till 7pm or later. The main problem for the tournament was the odd numbers (11 starters) and a significant number of drop outs over the weekend (1 planned and 3 unplanned.) I'm sure players have good reasons, but it sure makes organising a draw quite difficult.

#### Notes on Balance provisions

For the OctoBear 2000 scenarios, balance provisions were cumulative based upon the bid amount. So if for example the balance provision was delete one squad, a successful bid of 2 would double the balance provision (i.e. delete 2 squads), a successful bid of 3 would treble the balance provision (i.e. delete 3 squads).

#### Notes on Time Penalties

For the OctoBear 2000 scenarios, time penalties were applied as follows;  
At flag fall and for every 5 minutes over time thereafter, the opponent of the player may remove one counter from the overtime player's OB, reflecting the fatigue, ammunition depletion and mechanical stress that prolonged combat has on units.

# Red Army Tactics

By Mark McGilchrist

When playing the Russians in ASL, it seems that many players regard them as the "vanilla" force. Just plain old squads, with their shoddy Support Weapons, poor leadership, and average range. So while I guess this is all true, it seems to gloss over some of the more interesting "Russian" qualities and disadvantages.

## 1. Opponents

One of the key features of the Red Army is the moderately limited range of opponents it faced. In total, the Russians faced almost every Axis foe, from Finns to Japanese. However, the vast majority of the Eastern Front fighting was done between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army, so that's the comparison to make. The Red Army troops are qualitatively inferior to the Wehrmacht unit of the same size (squad vs. squad; support weapon vs. support weapon; leader vs. leader), and manifestly inferior to SS and Finnish troops. They are however pretty much a match for the Axis Minors, the Italians and on those rare occasions, the Japanese.

## 2. Numerical Superiority



Possibly the most defining feature of the Russians is the sheer quantity of them. This translates into more firepower, and more significantly, more movement elements. Sure a Panther is better than a T-34, but is it better than six! What the Red Army lacks in terms of technical finesse, it can make up for in quantity.

ASL is about Fire and Movement, and the Red Army usually have enough numbers to do both. Russians are perhaps the only nationality that can

regularly close on defending units, exhausting First and Final Fire (usually with fatal consequences), and still have troops to close in for the kill (or press the defenders into Final Protective Fire). This is what Human Wave tactics are all about, using mass to quickly take out enemy positions, and fracture defensive lines.

## 3. Leaders



Red Army leadership is poor, no getting around it. The Red Army therefore needs to think in terms of fire groups of spread out units, not killer stacks. This will limit the amount of damage the kill stacks can do as well. More importantly, the Russians need to act conservatively with their leaders, keeping them from harm so they can rally up the men and continue the fight. Russian officers lead from the rear, shooting those that break and run. Commissars often seem like the ideal Russian leaders in this regard, and it seems almost detrimental that they are excluded after October 1942.

## 4. Infantry



Russian infantry squads represent 9 riflemen or 8 SMG gunners. As the war progressed, Russian manpower began to dwindle. Larger formation strengths were reduced and became significantly smaller than German equivalents. To compensate, heavier firepower was given to infantry units in the form of more mortars, machine guns and artillery. From 1943 more attention was given to replacements to existing units, rather than new unit formation.



## 5. **Morale**

Red Army morale is usually average to good, with ELR levels being the main concern. With no 2<sup>nd</sup> Line units, Red Army units more quickly turn to Conscript scum under low ELR conditions. So whilst Red Army units will fight as hard as the equivalent German, one bad DR will ruin them.

## 6. **Range**

Every aspect of the Red Army declines as the range increases. There is no reason for Russians to ever seek long range engagement, they must always press close to the Germans. Obviously this makes city fighting the favoured form of Red Army warfare. Once you've seen the Russians in the Stalingrad factories, you understand the problems the Germans had.

## 7. **SMG Squads**



5-2-7 and 6-2-8 units are perhaps the most significantly Red Army unit in ASL. The archetypal picture of the Russian assault group, Russian infantry with PPSH Submachine guns hung round their necks in Russian style. The SMG squads are the prime assault squad of the Red Army, dishing out 4 FP assault fire, and that extra punch in Close Combat.

## 8. **Close Combat**

Another friend to the Red Army. Man-to-man, the Russians are equal to almost every opponent, with the exception of Pioneer squads. SMG squads usually have a slight but significant FP advantage, but even the lowly 4-2-6 Conscript squads are as good as a 4-5-8 in Melee. The best part about Close combat, is that losing a few Russians to kill an equal number of Germans means that the Russians are probably still going to have a few squads left, the Germans probably won't.

## 9. **Tanks**



Red Army tanks aren't always the best, but they seem to have the pick of the Allied AFV. The Soviets seem to have avoided the Anglo-American fault of under-gunning their AFV, so Russian tanks are usually capable tank killers, and sometimes well enough armoured to withstand almost anything the Germans can throw at them, including panzerfausts! Generally Russian tanks have good speed, good cross country performance, and adequate MGs. The real downfall is ability to hit a target, which returns to the problem of range. At close ranges, this disadvantage is negligible. The only other disadvantages is poorer ROF compared to German equivalents, and no Smoke dischargers. There is also the added handicaps of no radios (forcing Platoon Movement), and many Russian tanks have poor transmissions, which means they can Stall.

## 10. **Tank Riders**



Starting from 1942, it is a minor advantage, but tank riders were widely used by the Red Army to make up for lack of armoured troop transports, and to speed the initial assault units into battle. Tank Brigades generally had an attached infantry Battalion, of which an SMG Company was allocated to ride into battle. These troops were known as *Desentniki*, or tank marines. SMG units are clearly the best choice for tank riders, since it is desirable that they close range quickly to bring their FP into play.

### 11. Assault Guns



Ranging from the very ordinary to the very tough. The Russians didn't seem to dick around here, they slapped the biggest ordnance they could manage onto the chassis they had available. They are mobile guns, not tanks.

### 12. Cavalry



The Red Army used large scale horse mounted Cavalry units in two roles. Mounted infantry supported Tank units in a very similar role to that of motorised infantry in western armies, and also used cavalry as reconnaissance units. These roles do not transfer very well to ASL, but it is worth bearing in mind.

### 13. Sappers/Engineers



Although relatively unsophisticated, the Red Army had plenty of Sapper and Engineer battalions, and but used them primarily for construction works, bridge and road building etc. Mine clearing was often done by penal battalions, though later in the war the Red Army used specialist mine clearing vehicles. The civilian population was frequently called upon to assist with major construction works.

### 14. Winter & Ski Troops



After the disastrous Winter War in Finland in 1939-40, the Red Army made an effort to adapt to extreme Winter conditions. The extent to this was achieved can be measured by the repeated success of Red Army winter offensives, and the fear Germans had of winter conditions. In ASL terms, Russians are effected by Extreme Winter (E3.74) prior to April 1941. There should also be far greater use of Red Army Winter Camouflage (E3.712). The Red Army also formed special Ski Battalions in 1939 & 1941 as seasonal units. From 1942, Ski Brigades were formed on a semi-permanent basis.

### 15. Fortifications

One of the things even the Germans acknowledged the Red Army excelled at. The -1 DRM for Russians digging Foxholes is one benefit, but more importantly, the Russians can use Fortifications to make a defensive battle more favourable to their kind of battle (up close), and to break up German attacks. The Red Army also designated units known as "Fortified Regions" (*Ukreplennye Raiony*), which were especially infantry battalions reinforced with a MG battalion, an Anti-Tank Battalion, and a Field Artillery Battery. These reinforcement were later merged into combined MG-artillery Battalions.

### 16. Machine Guns



Russian machine guns were generally of the older type, the standard Maxim Model 1910 of the Tsarist Army. It was cumbersome and archaic



compared to German MGs. The Degtaryev DP "record player" LMG was more modern, and was replaced in 1944 by the DPM.

Poor reliability and heavier portage is the main problems with Russian MMG & HMGs. This means that they have to be well emplaced and fought from that position, with fresh gunners ready to replace any that break.

#### 17. AT Weapons



No Panzerfausts, Panzerschrecks or Anti-Tank Magnetic mines. ATRs are common, even until the end of the war, and these can keep away the light armour like Armoured Cars and Halftracks. The Red Army relied on ordnance to do its anti-tank work, and this means tanks, assault guns, guns and even artillery.

#### 18. Guns



Red Army guns share the disadvantages of hitting at longer ranges, but otherwise seem equivalent to German weapons. Tactically, the Red Army made far greater use of Guns in the front lines, with Guns designed with dual-roles in mind.

#### 19. Mortars



Red Army mortars were highly successful and widely used. The 50mm Mortar is the best of its calibre, with a longer and more useful range for a "support weapon". The 82mm mortar is the equal of the German 81mm, with the advantage of Advancing Fire capability after 1941. The 120mm mortar was copied by the Germans, and provided good, portable medium/heavy calibre support fire (i.e. OBA).

#### 20. Artillery



Russian OBA is very poor by comparison, with low numbers of black chits, poor radio performance, and the limited numbers of Russian leaders making it hard to spare one for observation duties. However, often it is the only Smoke available, which makes it worth the trouble. Historically speaking, almost every Russian set piece assault was preceded by a massive bombardment, which was carefully timetabled. The Russians also used artillery corridors, lifting the barrage in 100-200m wide sections of the front. Russian infantry and tanks

then followed these corridors to break through into the rear.

## 21. Smoke

What smoke? The Red Army is a smoke-free zone. No Smoke grenades except for Assault Engineers, little ordnance smoke, very few Smoke discharges on the vehicles. The best thing about Lend-Lease equipment is that it smokes!

Historically, the Red Army did use smoke, including smoke screen laid by fighter aircraft.

## 22. Human Wave



The great, all-Russian tactic that is possibly worth a closer look since the rules have changed a little recently.

The pre-requisites for the Human Wave are;  
- a chain of 3 ADJACENT Locations, with an average of 2 MMC per Location, plus one Leader in the Wave. MMC can't be Guarding prisoners, PRC, or ADJACENT to the target.  
- The target must be with 8 hexes, and at least one unit must have LOS to an enemy unit.

The HW must then place a Direction marker along a (Alternate) hexgrain. This is the major change to the Wave, units must move Forward, or may move Sideways into an enemy occupied Location. All HW units must change location. In addition, if the range between a HW unit and the target ever increases, it must be marked with a Hex Grain Range counter, and may not again increase the range between itself and the target whilst so marked. The Hex Grain Range Counter

is removed when the unit decreases the range between itself and the target, or at the end of MPH.

## 23. Commissars



Stricly speaking, Commisasarars are not part of the Red Army, but a Special Detachment of CHEKA, the NKVD. However, they were attached to Red Army units with co-command until October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1942. After that time they undertook political and morale duties in the Red Army, as well as propaganda duties in the Red Army and against the invaders.

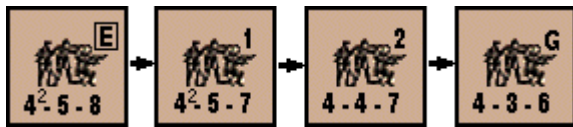
9-0 and 10-0 Commissars have uniquely Red Army abilities. In general, they are rallying machines, ignoring DM, increasing morale. With elite troops they can do wonders to keep the Red Army up and running, but should steer away from Conscripts, since they tend to have only 50% chances of rallying, and 50% chance of Casualty Reducing them.

# Late War Red Army Infantry

## *An optional Rule*

Tired of the seemingly toneless performance of the Red Army infantry, a performance that actually seems worse after Oct. 1942 when the Commissars are recalled? This is an optional rule that can be substituted into any existing late war scenario to pep-up the Red guys a little.

### Red Guards



In any scenario set from 1943-45, British 4-5-8 units may be substituted for Russian 4-5-8 units in any Formations designated as Guards, and normal British replacement/Battle Hardening occurs for these units.

### Late War Red Army



In any scenario set from 1944-45, British 4-5-8 units may be substituted for all Russian 4-5-8 units, and British 4-5-7 units may be substituted for Russian 4-4-7 units. Normal British replacement/Battle Hardening occurs for these units.

**Red Guards** and **Late War Red Army** units are treated as Russian (A25.2) except are modified in the following manner.

- they may use Smoke Grenades, but never use WP Smoke Grenades. Non-Guards units must add a +1 drm to their Smoke Grenade Placement dr (A24.1).
- they may deploy (A1.31) on a 1TC
- they may use Squad Spraying Fire (A7.34) - treat their range as underlined.

### Secondary Weaponry

Given the widespread use of the PPSH submachinegun in the Red Army from September 1942 onwards, Red Army squads could often choose between rifles and SMGs depending on their circumstances. Prior to setup, the Russia player may exchange any/all 5-2-7 squads for 4-4-7 squads (and vice-versa), and exchange 6-2-8 squads for 4-5-8 squads. During play, any non-PRC Russian squad or HS in the same hex as a leader may be exchanged in a similar manner during the RPh provided they pass a 3TC. Leadership is the only DRM.



# Ranks in the Red Army

## Comparative Table of Ranks

Red Army from 1940	Deutsche Heer	Waffen-SS	US Army	British Army
Generalissimus <sup>1</sup>	--	Reichsführer-SS	--	--
Marshal Sovetskoy	Generalfeldmarschall	SS-Oberstgruppenführer	General of the Army	Field Marshal
Glavnyy Marshal <sup>2</sup>	--	--	--	--
Marshal <sup>3</sup>	Generaloberst	SS-Obergruppenführer	--	--
General Armii	General	SS-Gruppenführer	General	General
General-polkovnik	Generalleutnant	SS-Brigadeführer	Lieutenant General	Lieutenant-General
General-leitnant	Generalmajor	SS-Oberführer	Major General	Major General
General-major	--	--	Brigadier General	Brigadier
Polkovnik	Oberst	SS-Standartenführer	Colonel	Colonel
Podpolkovnik	Oberstleutnant	SS-Obersturmbannführer	Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant Colonel
Major	Major	SS-Sturmbannführer	Major	Major
--	Rittmeister (cav)	--	--	--
Kapitan	Hauptmann	SS-Hauptsturmführer	Captain	Captain
Starshiy Leitenant	Oberleutnant	SS-Obersturmführer	1st Lieutenant	Lieutenant
Leitenant	Leutnant	SS-Untersturmführer	2nd Lieutenant	2nd Lieutenant
Mladshiy leitenant	Stabsfeldwebel	SS-Sturmscharführer	Sergeant Major <sup>4</sup>	Warrant Officer 1
--	Oberfähnrich	SS-Standarten-Oberjunker	--	--
Starshina	Oberfeldwebel	SS-Hauptscharführer	Master Sergeant <sup>5</sup>	Warrant Officer 2
Starshiy serzhant	Feldwebel	SS-Oberscharführer	Technical Sergeant	--
--	Fähnrich	SS-Standartenjunker	--	--
Serzhant	Unterfeldwebel	SS-Scharführer	Staff Sergeant	Staff Sergeant
Mladshiy serzhant	Unteroffizier	SS-Unterscharführer	Sergeant	--
--	--	--	--	--
Efрейтор	Oberaufreiter	SS-Rottenführer	Cornoral	Cornoral
--	--	--	--	--
--	Gefreiter	SS-Sturmmann	--	--
--	--	--	--	--
--	Oberschutze	SS-Oberschutze	Private 1st Class	--
Krasnoarmeets/	Schutze	SS-Schutze	Private	Private

<sup>1</sup> Generalissimus rank has been used in whole Russian/Soviet history only twice. First it was used before Bolshevik's regime and achieved by Alexander Suvorov, Prince Braunschweig and Alexander Menshikov. Then it was accepted again from June 26, 1945, and achieved by Josef Stalin.

<sup>2</sup> Was accepted in October 1943

<sup>3</sup> Was accepted in January 1943

<sup>4</sup> Same as FIRST SGT only on Battalion (Bn Sgt Maj) or Division (Div Sgt Maj) level. The Division level is top.

<sup>5</sup> Usually an administrative position. i.e. legal, quarter-master etc.



# Brief history of the Red Army Ranks 1920-1945

## Before 1924

There weren't any ranks in the Red Army. All officers were divided by their duties:

- comandarm (army)
- comcor (corps)
- combrig (brigade)
- comdiv (division)
- compolka (regiment)
- combat (battalion)
- comroty (company)
- comeska (eskadron = cavalry squadron)
- comvzvoda (platoon)

## 1924-1935

In 1924 all high commanders were divided on 14 categories and badges of ranks were applied for the first time: "cubes", "ties" and "rhombs".

## 1935-1937

Personal military ranks were accepted from September 22, 1935 under the order NKO #144.

## 1937-1939

On August 5, 1937, some additional ranks were accepted (one "cube"):

- Mladshiy leitenant
- Mladshiy voennyi technik
- Mladshiy technik-intendant

## 1939-1940

On September 1, 1939, some additional ranks were accepted (three "ties"):

- Podpolkovnik
- Batal'onniy komissar

From this year all former Polkovniks and Polkovoy Komissars received one additional "tie" (four "ties" total)

## 1940-1943

On May 7, 1940, there were accepted:

New ranks	Old ranks	New badges
General-major	Komdiv	Two stars
General-leitenant	Komkor	three stars
General-polkovnik	Komandarm vtorogo ranga	four stars
General armii	Komandarm pervogo ranga	Five stars

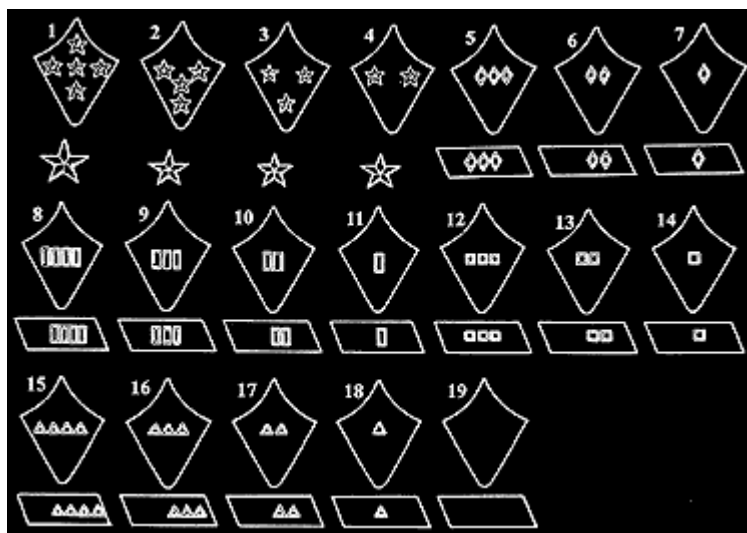
The Kombrig rank was missed, so all persons who were ranked as Kombrig were either re-attested and received the General-major rank, or received the Polkovnik rank.

**In November 1940, some additional ranks were accepted for soldiers and non-commissioned officers:**

New ranks	New badges of ranks
Efreitor	One triangle
Mladshiv serzhant	One triangle
Serzhant	Two triangles
Starshiv serzhant	Three triangles
Starshina	Four triangles

#### **Soviet Ranks from 1940**

1. General Armii
2. General-Polkovnik
3. General-Leitenant
4. General-Major
5. Komkor
6. Komdiv
7. Kombrig
8. Polkovnik
9. Podpolkovnik
10. Major
11. Kapitan
12. Starshiy leitenant
13. Leitenant
14. Mladshiy Leitenant
15. Starshina
16. Starshiy serzhant
17. Serzhant
18. Mladshiy serzhant
19. Krasnoarmeets



#### **From 1943**

In January 1943, the existing rank system was altered: political officers received common military ranks; instead buttonholes the shoulder straps were accepted. Besides, some additional HQ ranks were accepted:

Marshal Aviatsii  
 Marshal Artillerii  
 Marshal Voisk Svyazi  
 Marshal Inzhenernikh Voisk

In October 1943, more HQ ranks were accepted:

Glavniy Marshal Aviatsii  
 Glavniy Marshal Artillerii  
 Glavniy Marshal bronetankovikh Voisk

## Minedogs

In common with many other European armies, the Red Army maintained a number of 'War dogs' for various military purposes such as sniffing out explosives or even delivering messages and medical supplies in front-line areas, but there can have been few roles more bizarre for dogs to play than the Soviet dog mines that were used for a short period during World War 2. Exactly how the idea of using dogs as mobile anti-tank mines came about has yet to be determined, but the idea was simple and seemed to offer great things for the hard-pressed Soviet forces during 1941-42.

The basic idea of the dog mine was that the dogs were trained to dive under enemy tanks whenever they appeared. Each dog carried on its back a wooden box (or packets secured to its body by a harness) and from the top of the box (or packets) protruded a vertical wooden post. When this post was



pushed backwards as the dog moved under the tank it detonated the explosives contained in the box (or packets) to the detriment of the tank and the unfortunate dog. Some accounts talk of wire sensors in place of the wooden post.

For all its simplicity the idea of the dog mines did not last very long. The Red Army soon discovered that there were two main disadvantages to the idea. One was that in order to train the dogs to dive under tanks they were always given food under a tank. This was all very well, but to most dogs the familiar smells and sights under a Soviet tank were very different to those under German tanks. Thus in a battlefield situation once they were released with the explosives attached the dogs often tended to make for the familiar smells and sounds of Soviet tanks rather than the intended German tanks, with obvious results. The second snag was that the Germans soon learned of the Soviet *Hundminen* and spread the word through the efficient German military media machinery that all Soviet dogs likely to be encountered were rabid and were to be shot as soon as they were spotted. This alone caused the virtual disappearance of dogs along the Eastern Front within a matter of days, making the further use of dog mines that much more unlikely. One other factor now seems obvious was that on any battlefield the noise and general chaos in progress would unhinge any normal dogs' behaviour, making them run amok in any direction other than towards tanks of any kind, and so hazardous to anyone in their vicinity.

